

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

August 3, 2010

**Amendment to Agenda Item 3**

**Evaluation of DCFS' Computer Technology in Audit**

Since the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was subjected to a management audit by Price Waterhouse in 1998, technology has been central to DCFS's efforts to enhance children's safety. Two key initiatives have been the 2005 introduction of the Family and Children's Index (FCI) and the introduction of 2,400 tablet computers in 2007.

The effectiveness of these technology programs is in dispute. Some contend that FCI is working to identify safety risks to children and that social workers are using the tablet computers despite the lack of portable broadband cards and network licenses. Others, including social workers and child welfare advocates, claim the systems are failing to perform as they were intended.

An independent audit would provide the type of thorough assessment necessary to ensure Los Angeles County's substantial investments in technology are paying off,

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and whether improvements or overhauls are necessary. The 1998 Price Waterhouse audit found shortcomings in DCFS's use of technology at the time, and provided constructive direction to improve DCFS's capabilities.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Direct the Chief Executive Officer to specify that any independent audit of DCFS and its safety enhancements include an evaluation of DCFS's use of computer technology. This review must include, but need not be limited to, an assessment of the effectiveness in enhancing social workers' ability to protect child safety of FCI, DCFS's deployment of tablet computers and the computer alert system requested by Supervisor Molina and previously approved by the Board of Supervisors.

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